DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 135 451 PS 008 614

AUTHOR Miller-Jacobs, Sandra
TITLE Open Education for Preschool Special Needs Children.
PUB DATE Feb 76
NOTE 76p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; Cognitive Development; Educational Diagnosis; *Educational Objectives; Emotional Development; Exceptional Child Education; Handicapped Children; Learning Activities; *Open Education; Performance Based Teacher Education; Play; Preschool Curriculum; *Preschool Education; *Regular Class Placement; Social Development; *Special Education; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Education; Teacher Role; Teaching Methods; Teaching Skills
IDENTIFIERS Child Development Associates

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses and defines open education, preschool education and special education and the philosophy behind merging these three approaches. The paper attempts to show that each approach has unique contributions to make to the education of the young child with special needs. The role of teacher is discussed as well as aspects of learning and development that are stressed in these approaches. Many features are held in common. All three are concerned with fostering cognitive, affective and psychomotor development, a positive self-concept, independence and self-motivation. Implications for teacher education are discussed and competencies needed by teachers in a merged program are listed. Appendices include sections on themes and assumptions underlying open education; pedagogical characteristics of open education teachers at the primary level; goals of open, preschool and special education; play and young special needs children; competencies developed by the Massachusetts Early Education Council; competency areas for the generic special educator; and Child Development Associate (CDA) competencies. (MS)

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Open Education

for

Preschool Special Needs Children

Sandra Miller-Jacobs
February 1976

PS008614

About the Author

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The structure of knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic, and a function of the synthesis of each individual's experience with the world.

Roland S. Barth

Table of Contents

	Page
Forward	i
Open Education	1
Preschool Education	12
Special Education	15
Merging these Fields	17
Implications for Teacher Education	27

Appendices

Appendix A	Assumptions Which Underlie Open Education
Appendix B	Themes in Open Education
Appendix C	Some Pedagogical Characteristics of Open Education Teachers at the Primary Level
Appendix D	Goals of Open Education
Appendix E	Goals of Preschool Education
Appendix F	Goals of Special Education
Appendix G	Play & Young Special Needs Children
Appendix H	Competencies Developed by MEEC
Appendix I	Competency Areas for Generic Special Educator
Appendix J	CDA Competencies

Forward

To be effective, a teacher must know what to do with children, but more importantly, must understand why it is being done. In analyzing the "whys" of open education, preschool education, and special education, it becomes apparent that their goals are very similar, only their methods vary.

This paper is an attempt to show that each approach has its unique contributions to make to the education of the young child with special needs. It is an outgrowth of many hours of reading and research; observations at Baylie's Beginning Center (Mass. Hospital School, Canton); discussions with Peter and Marian Hainsworth of Educational Development Center (Newton), Allan Leitman and Cornelia Vorhees of the Advisory for Open Education, the staff of Baylie's Beginning Center, and Tanya White of Arlington Public Schools; participation in workshops run by EDC/ERIN; videotaping and editing of videotapes of Baylie's Beginning Center; discussions with parents and professionals who viewed these videotapes; and my own experience using open education with preschool children with special needs.

Open Education

Much confusion exists regarding what open education is and what it is not. Part of the reason for this confusion is that open education is not a model or a set of techniques that can be imitated, but a philosophical approach to education. To be an open educator is to subscribe to "a set of shared attitudes and convictions about the nature and purposes of teaching and learning, about the nature of childhood and adolescence and ultimately about the nature of man" (Silberman, 1973, p. xix). Open education "is a way of thinking about children, about learning, and about knowledge" (Barth, 1972, p. 55). However, many people do not wish a lengthy philosophical explanation of open education; they want a concise statement which can be repeated when they are asked, "What is open education?" As educators and other concerned people attempt to respond simply to this very complex question and as people visit supposed "open" classrooms, misunderstandings arise. Examples of common misconceptions are:

- There is no structure in the open classroom.

Visitors to the open classroom see children engaged in a variety of activities - some are lying on the floor reading, some are playing games in small groups, some are completing projects. To the casual observer it looks like children are doing whatever they please.

- Teachers in open classrooms have an easy job.

Teachers in open classrooms are seen talking with children individually or in small groups. Since teachers do not lecture to the entire class, some people do not think they are "teaching".

- Children in open classrooms play all day.

Children in open classrooms work in small groups on projects and can be seen talking, smiling, and laughing together. They do not spend hours filling in worksheets or workbooks. Many people do not think the children are "working" nor do they think that learning is occuring.

- Open space is open education.

Open classrooms do not have desks lined up in rows. The room is arranged to maximize the space for projects and interest centers. Children can be seen lying on the floor, sitting around tables or desks, or in lofts. People mistakenly believe that by rearranging classrooms to look like open classrooms they can create an open classroom.

In reality, in order to understand how to create an open classroom, it is necessary to understand the basic attitudes, convictions, and assumptions which underlie this approach. The most complete listing of these assumptions has been compiled by Roland Barth (see Appendix A). Barth has grouped these assumptions according to "children's learning" and "knowledge". Herbert Walberg and Susan Thomas have grouped the characteristics of open education according to eight themes (see Appendices B & C). For the purposes of this

paper, the philosophy of open education will be explained through an analysis of the teacher's role and the learning process.

In an open classroom the teacher's role changes from the traditional "transmitter of knowledge" to a facilitator of learning. In the traditional classroom, the teacher is the knowledgeable authority figure who transmits his/her wealth of information to a group of children. The teacher in this situation decides what will be taught (e.g. the magnetic field), how it will be taught (e.g. experiment, reading text and answering questions), and when it will be taught (e.g. Wednesday, 1:30 P.M.). In the open classroom the teacher and the students make these decisions together. The teacher acts as a resource person, helping the students discover answers to questions they have. In such a classroom, the teacher might arrange a table of magnets; magnetic and non-magnetic materials; and pictures, books, and filmstrips. Some students will be attracted to this table; one may want to learn how magnets were discovered, another may want to discover which materials are magnetic, while another may want to find out how magnets are used in industry. The teacher has set the stage for this learning by displaying the materials and arousing interest in the students. S/he then encourages the students to find the information they seek and guides their learning by asking leading questions and suggesting resources.

This change in role in many ways epitomizes open education, for to be a facilitator of learning one must believe in the assumptions

of the philosophy of open education. As facilitators of learning, teachers respect the students as individuals, listening and observing each child and responding to his/her specific needs. It is this responsive listening and observing that enables teachers to recognize and accept children's ideas, thoughts, and feelings and promotes an open, caring relationship. Teachers show their trust in the students by encouraging them to make appropriate decisions about their learning and by accepting these decisions. Students do not see the teacher as someone who tells them what do do, but as a resource person who clarifies ideas, offers suggestions, and provides encouragement and support.

To effectively facilitate learning, the teacher must constantly be evaluating the children. Only through daily observations (auditory and visual) over a long period of time can the teacher make diagnostic judgements about specific skill needs. The teacher can then utilize his/her knowledge about the child's interests and learning style to provide an appropriate activity, grouping children with similar needs and interests.

It is important to note that diagnostic information is gathered from evaluation of the child's individual work and progress, not ~~on~~ from standarized tests. Open educators strongly believe that testing situations which occur at one moment in time, do not provide adequate appraisals of children's abilities and are contrary to the basic assumptions which underlie open education. In such testing, all

children are asked to respond to the same questions, at the same time, and in the same way. Allowances are not made for individual differences in learning style or work rate. Emphasis is placed on the correct responses, not on the process used in arriving at this answer. The children must work individually, may not ask questions, and do not receive feedback from the testor or the test materials; as a result, test results are not considered accurate measures of a child's learning. In addition, open educators believe that knowledge is a personal synthesis of many experiences and that those learnings which can be measured most objectively may not be the most important.

With this understanding of the teacher's role, it is now possible to analyze open education's beliefs about learning. Open educators stress the importance of the process of learning, not its products. The learning process in the open classroom is an active one. The children do not sit passively at their desks listening to the teacher, but are active seekers of information. Their role in decision-making is indicative of this active learning process as is their involvement in the learning activities (i.e. projects, research). Open educators believe that if children are actively involved and are enjoying themselves, learning is occuring. This helps to break down the traditional work/play distinction, which is not an important one in open education, for play is recognized as a legitimate means of learning. That children can be seen actively "playing", or interacting, with concrete materials in the classroom

reflects the basic belief that learning is based on concrete experiences from which abstract generalizations are drawn. In accordance with this belief, open education is experientially based. The students seek answers by utilizing the resources they find around them - materials (i.e. concrete manipulatives, books, films), people (i.e. peers, teachers, parents), and community resources (i.e. museums, offices, stores). The open education philosophy states that a strong self-concept, internal motivation, and internal locus of control are important factors in the learning process. Therefore, emphasis is placed on their development through the student's role in decision-making and through the acceptance of their feelings and ideas.

Open education's beliefs about the learning process have direct implications for the open educator's view of curriculum. The instructional materials in the classroom are extremely important, since the students' interaction with these materials provides the basis for the learning that occurs. The richer and more stimulating the environment, the more learning that will take place. The materials must speak out to the students, sparking their interest and enabling them to begin exploratory behavior. A wide variety of materials will not only interest more students, but will enable students, regardless of their learning style, to develop a skill or achieve a conceptualization. Children's learning styles are considered when the teacher plans the instructional materials and when the teacher and student decide which resources will help the student

successfully reach the educational goal. Individual learning rates are also considered, since the children continue working on an activity until it is completed regardless of how long that may take. (The teacher can help the student set appropriate time-lines.)

The curriculum in the open classroom is constantly evolving and developing; it is not predetermined by a textbook or outline handed down from some higher source of authority. The students are encouraged to integrate their school and after-school worlds, so that what they learn at home or in their community becomes a part of their total education. As a result, students directly influence the curriculum, by sharing their interest in yoga, geology, or history. Students also influence the curriculum by the questions they raise about the materials which the teacher has chosen to display in the classroom. Through the use of these carefully selected materials, the teacher exerts his/her influence on the curriculum, for students will not become interested in topics with which they have no experience.

As the teacher focuses on each child's cognitive and affective development, the traditional subjects or disciplines tend to merge. Open educators question whether it is important if reading a biography of a historical figure is history or language arts or if the weight of elephants is science or math. To allow a clock rather than a child's interest determine the length of time to investigate these issues makes even less sense. Subject and time divisions

are seen as artificial and tend not to occur in open classrooms (hence the term "integrated day").

The structure of the open classroom is achieved through the teacher's planning and monitoring of the educational program and through the consistency of the affectual classroom climate. While many activities may occur simultaneously in the open classroom, the affectual classroom climate remains constant. The trust that exists, the respect that is shown, and the acceptance that is felt forms the basic atmosphere in which learning can occur. Each individual is valued as a unique being and care and concern is shown to everyone. Limits are consistently and firmly set according to each person's needs. Choices are given to the children and their decisions are accepted. The children are given the freedom to follow their ideas and interests and to express themselves. The classroom is always responsive to each child's needs and interests. This consistency forms part of the structure of the open classroom.

The other part of this structure is the continual planning and monitoring done by the teacher. The teacher spends much time observing and listening to the children. Accurate records are kept on each child's participation through the use of anecdotal records, contracts, and checklists. Based on the information gathered through these monitoring systems, the teacher plans for the children, organizing resources and materials to help extend their learning. A physical learning environment that is responsive to the children's

academic and social needs and interests is created by the teacher. If the children have not been using a particular area of the classroom, it is changed so that it will arouse the children's curiosity. The teacher also observes the children's interactions with their peers and the adults in the classroom and analyzes this information to decide how much intervention and freedom is appropriate for each child. In these ways the teacher makes certain that the open classroom is structured to suit each child's individual needs and interests.

With this understanding of the philosophy of the open education approach, it is possible to look at the goals open educators hope to achieve (see Appendix D). In the broadest of terms, open educators want each child to develop to his/her fullest potential. Their concern is for the total child's development, and they therefore focus on affective as well as cognitive development. Skills must occur in a situation which has meaning for the child, not in isolation. Open educators are not concerned with the development of cognitive skills to the exclusion of other skills. As a result of this belief, goals do not stress the development of specific cognitive skills. However, the development of cognitive skills ~~are~~ is implicit in the general goals since they are necessary to achieve these goals. While the following goals do overlap somewhat, they seem to this writer to be the most distinctive goals of open educators:

Children will develop a positive self-concept. Children in open classrooms will trust in themselves - their ideas and decisions -

and will rely on their own judgments and value system. They will see themselves as unique individuals and will value their abilities, interests, thoughts and feelings. They will be able to express themselves through verbal and nonverbal communication with others, sharing their ideas, beliefs and feelings. They will be able to accept and show concern, caring, trust and warmth for others. Secure with themselves, they will be able to respect other people's needs, abilities, and feelings. They will realistically appraise their own strengths and weaknesses and seek to improve themselves.

Children will accept responsibility for their own learning. Children of open classrooms will develop a sense of independence regarding their learning. They will maintain a sense of curiosity, asking questions and seeking answers. They will develop decision-making and problem-solving skills. They will maintain the interest and discipline to work out solutions to problems that arise. Aware of the variety of resources, they will seek out appropriate ones and critically analyze the available information. Based on the information gathered they will reach their own individual decisions. They will show an active involvement in and an enjoyment for learning. Learning is accepted as an integral part of life and does not end with the school bell.

Children will be able to function in a changing society. With the vast accumulation of knowledge in the world, open educators are not concerned with children storing this knowledge. Rather, they

want children to develop a strategy for learning which can be applied to all future situations. Children who are involved in open education will mature into adults who will continue to learn because they will possess the skills necessary for self-learning.

Preschool Education

Statements of goals of preschool education (see Appendix E) are often very broad (e.g. Preschool education will help socialize the child to society.) or very narrow (e.g. The child will sit quietly while the teacher reads a story.) Neither type of statement is helpful in obtaining a representational picture of preschool education. While different programs may emphasize different goals, there does exist the need, at least for the purposes of this paper, to develop a set of goals such as the following which reflect an overall picture of preschool education and its concern for a young child's total development:

Children will develop a positive self-concept. Preschool children will develop a sense of their own worth as unique individuals. Beginning with a basic understanding of their bodies, preschool children will develop an appreciation of who they are and what they can do. They will recognize their own belongings and abilities and take pride in their accomplishments. They will use their creativity to express themselves. They will recognize, and accept their feelings, and use socially acceptable behavior to express these feelings. They will trust adults other than their immediate relatives. They will understand and accept limits and will internalize them to develop self-control and self-discipline.

Children will develop social skills. Children involved in

preschool education will be able to trust others and respect their feelings and belongings. They will develop those skills necessary for independent functioning in the classroom, from self-help skills to participation skills. They will attend to tasks or activities until they are completed, accepting reinforcement from the teacher, their peers, or themselves. They will initiate play situations, play independently and cooperatively, sharing and taking turns. They will interact in the classroom with the other children and the materials without adult help.

Children will develop their intellectual abilities. Children in preschool will develop receptive and expressive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, and sensory-perceptual skills. They will engage in activities (e.g. finger plays, block building) which use these skills. They will develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills through their play activities and will be expected to attend, discriminate, remember and form conceptualizations.

Children will develop competence in interacting with the environment. The children will develop an awareness of their world and will inquire about, explore, and investigate their surroundings. They will recognize and develop a familiarity with places (e.g. park, library, bakery) and people (e.g. policeperson, fireperson) in their community. They will understand and accept the limits which are placed on them in various settings (e.g. home, school, playgrounds).

In comparing these educational goals with those of open education,

there is no apparent conflict. While the preschool goals appear more skill oriented, these skills are necessary to achieve the broader goals of open education. Certainly the concern of both open educators and preschool educators for children's total development, especially in the social-emotional area, is quite apparent. Included in this area is the desire for the child to develop a positive self-concept and a sense of autonomy. Both open educators and preschool educators stress the importance of play. Remembering that open education in America is based on the British Infant School, it is understandable that open education and preschool education are compatible.

Special Education

Special education developed out of the necessity of providing educational services to those children who were excluded from or were unable to profit from the existing educational system because they had "special" needs. The goals established by these programs (see Appendix F) focus on helping the children (regardless of age) develop to their fullest potential; goals for these children can be grouped as follows:

Children will develop a positive self-concept. Beginning with an awareness of their physical body, children with special needs will develop a recognition and appreciation of who they are and what they can do. They will accept their abilities and limitations and will develop feelings of self-worth. They will trust in themselves and others and will respond to the warmth and caring offered them. They will develop a sense of autonomy. They will understand their feelings and handle them in socially acceptable ways.

Children will improve their functioning in academic, behavioral, perceptual, and motor areas. Children in special education programs will receive continuous diagnosis, evaluation, and educational programming for receptive and expressive language, gross and fine motor, sensory-perceptual, cognitive, and social skills, according to their specific needs.

Children will develop an awareness of their environment and competence in functioning within it. Children with special needs

will recognize their surroundings and the changes that occur. They will be able to interact with the people and the materials in their environment and develop competence in using those materials. They will adapt to the limits set by different people, to changes in routines, and to different environments (e.g. school, aquarium, beach). The children will be aware of the changes they effect on other people and materials.

The concern for the child's total development and the attempt to individualize an educational program to suit the child's needs are similar to the goals of both open education and preschool education. Further comparisons will be made in the following section.

Merging the Fields

In analyzing the goals of open education, preschool education and open education, many similarities are apparent. Most important is the focus on the individual child in relation to his/her educational development. There is a basic belief in each child's worth which underlies all three fields and which can be seen in the respect and trust which characterizes the teacher-student relationship.

The concern for each child's total development is apparent in all three fields; activities that foster the development of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains are included in all programs. These educators stress the importance of the development of a positive self-concept because they are aware of the relationship of self-concept to learning. These educators realize that the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains are interconnected, and that learnings in one area will affect the other domains (e.g. The girl who masters riding a tricycle will feel good about herself.) Therefore, there is a recognition and an acceptance of children's feelings within the educational setting and a determination to help children understand and appropriately express their feelings.

All three types of programs seek to develop the child's sense of independence, enabling him/her to function in the classroom without constant adult attention and guidance. The teachers of open, preschool and special classes give the child enough time to complete at least one part of a task alone. Similarly, these teachers set

consistent firm limits so that the child can internalize them and develop self-control. A goal of all three programs is for each child to become internally motivated and to receive personal satisfaction from completing tasks rather than depending on tangible or social reinforcers.

The involvement of people other than the teacher is characteristic of all three programs. Parental figures are crucial to the development of young children and parents for young children with, or without, special needs are in some way included in the educational programs established for these children. In some programs teachers work directly with the parents, showing them how to provide educational activities within their home; some programs use parent volunteers; some hold meeting for parents. Open education programs use parents as resource people and they are welcomed and encouraged to participate directly in the classroom. Other community people (e.g. store owners, police, elderly) are invited to share their expertise with the children. Medical personnel are also involved in these programs providing information and services as needed. If these services cannot be provided within the classroom, as is often the case for preschool special needs children who receive therapy and medical attention in hospitals, the teachers maintain communication with the personnel so that there can be a carry-over to the classroom.

Individualization plays an important role in these programs. In their concern for the individual child, open educators and special

educators speak out against the use of labels. Both types of educators stress the importance of viewing children as children. Special educators are aware that two blind children may be as different from each other as two "normal" children. Open educators insist on spending time observing each child individually to learn about him/her. Only through continual assessment (i e. reflective observation) of children's strengths, weaknesses and interests can effective programs be developed and evaluated. A variety of approaches to achieve an educational goal must be presented to children to allow for individual learning styles and learning rates. All three programs emphasize the importance of individualizing the classroom. The teacher's ability to indicate to others the capabilities of each child, a result of focusing on individual children, is an important part of open, preschool, and special education programs. All three types of teachers keep accurate records of the children's progress through the use of anecdotal records and checklists and communicate this progress to concerned individuals. Letter or number grades are not used because they do not accurately represent a child. To report that Susie received a B in gross motor activities is not as accurate a picture as several specific statements such as: "Unaided, Susie can take three steps on the balance beam when it is six inches high." Similarly, these educators speak out against the use of standardized tests, as they are aware that an IQ score of 33 does not help them plan for the child. Teachers of preschool special

needs children are especially aware of the weaknesses of a testing situation which occurs only once in a strange setting with a stranger administering the test.

Methodalogically, the three programs are similar in their orientation toward experiential learning and their focus on the process, not products, of learning. Abstract learnings are based on concrete situations, especially for young children, and all three types of programs encourage children to interact with and explore materials (e.g. water, magnets) which are presented to them. The classroom and the surrounding community are used for the experiential learnings that occur. (e.g. Children visit the bakery to buy bread for snack.) Open, preschool, and special classes emphasize the learning process that occurs. The child should be provided with activities with which s/he can become involved and can be completed successfully. In art activities, for example, the final painting is not as important as the child's use of paints and brushes and his/her enjoyment while painting. Anything the child produces is worthwhile and valued. These educators tend to use open-ended activities (e.g. shaving cream, water, blocks) as well as closed or structured materials (e.g. puzzles) which have a "right" and a "wrong" way to be used. The open-ended activities provide success for the child regardless of his/her level of functioning. The child who splashes in the water is as successful as the child who transfers water from one bottle to another. The more structured materials

allow the child to feel success when s/he masters the puzzle and the pieces fit into the correct spaces.

Although each field focuses on the individual child, the contributions of each differ, as illustrated in Figure 1. In special education there is an emphasis on skill development and in both open and preschool education the role of play is of prime importance. In addition, unique to the field of open education is the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than a transmitter of knowledge. In order for open preschools for special needs children to exist, the contributions of each field must be incorporated.

While open educators talk about meeting the general academic and social needs of children, special educators are more explicit in stating specific skill weaknesses (e.g. visual memory, auditory discrimination). This skill orientation is perceived by many open and preschool educators as a mechanical and computerized approach to working with children. They interpret this approach as meaning that all children who have the same skill deficit receive the same remedial activities. Viewed this way, the computer-like attitude is easily recognizable - plug in a skill deficit and the computer spouts forth remedial activities to be implemented. In reality, this skill orientation is very individualized, and not at all mechanical or computerized. In focusing on each child individually, special educators realize that children require different approaches even though they may have the same skill problems. Not all children

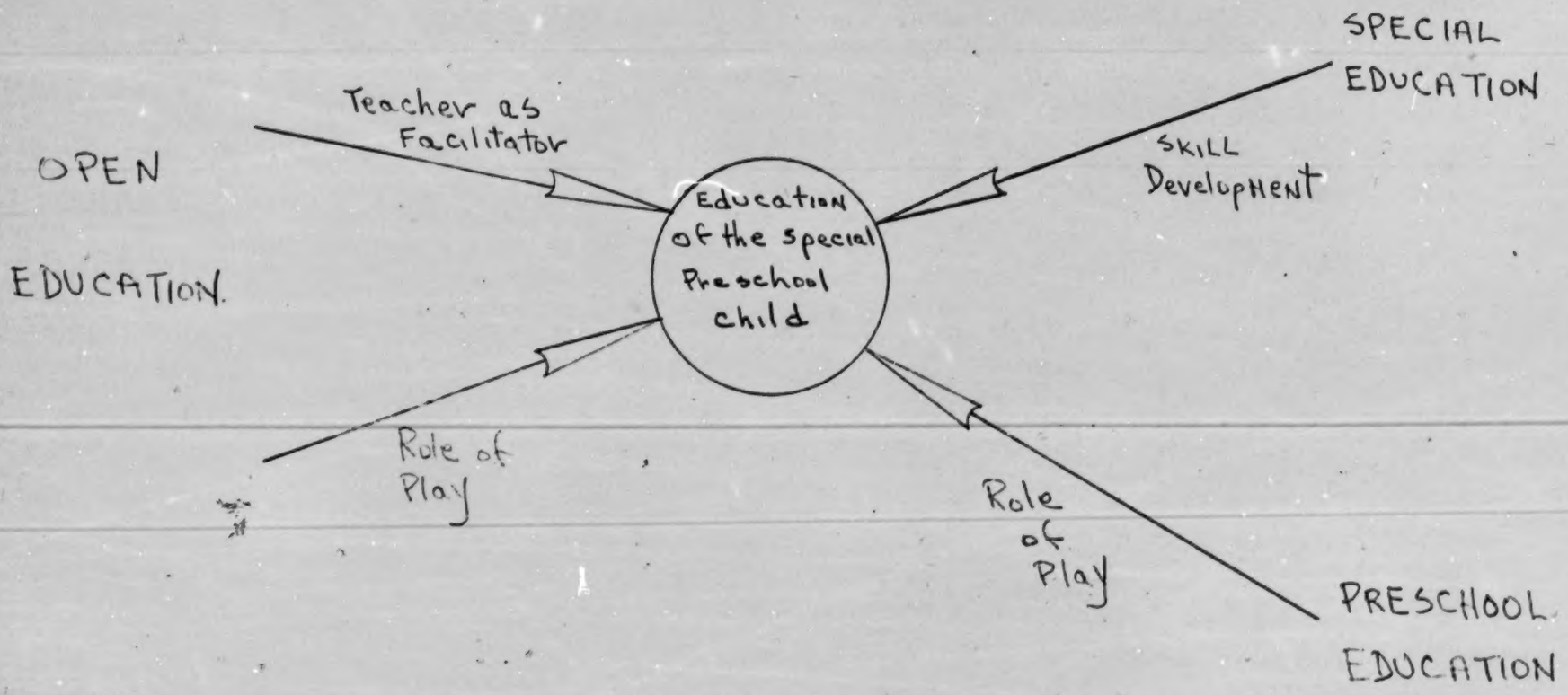

Figure 1

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF OPEN, PRESCHOOL, & SPECIAL EDUCATION

who have expressive language problems can receive an intensive language program. Each child's self-concept, social skills, interests and strengths help determine the appropriate educational plan. Specific skill information helps those who work with children with special needs to plan and provide appropriate and successful experiences.

Both open education and preschool education incorporate the use of play in their programs. Some programs for young special needs children also stress the importance of play for these children and their families (see Appendix G). Many preschools for special needs children are modeled after preschool education programs and use a time schedule similar to the following:

9:00 - 9:45	free play
9:45 - 10:00	clean up, bathroom
10:00 - 10:15	snack
10:15 - 10:30	circle time, songs, story, or rest
10:30 - 11:00	group activity (teacher-directed art/music/ movement lesson)
11:00 - 11:30	gross motor activities (inside or outside)
11:30	prepare to leave

From this organizational design, it is fairly easy to begin the process of opening the classroom.

Preschool teachers must begin this process by analyzing their educational beliefs to determine whether their classroom is functioning according to these beliefs. Teachers must ask and be able to answer for themselves such questions as: Why should <u>all</u> the children listen to a story at 10:15? What happens if a child decides s/he

does not want to participate in the teacher-planned group activity, but becomes involved in something else? Questions such as these basically focus on the children's right and capacity to make decisions about their learning. The realization that the children already are making such decisions (either by deciding to join or not to join the activity) changes the question to: Will these decisions be accepted? If the teacher answers affirmatively, the process of opening the classroom has begun, for an acceptance of children's decisions necessitates a change in the teacher's role, moving toward being a facilitator of learning. For example, if a child decides s/he wants to paint with materials that are not available, the teacher need not be concerned that the planned group lesson may be ruined, but can respond supportively by stating: "That's a good idea. Let's get the materials you need."

The process of opening the classroom will then require organizational changes. Perhaps the simplest way for the teacher using the schedule above to incorporate an open approach is to extend the free play situation into the rest of the day. Children can be given the freedom to go to the bathroom when they must. Some educators maintain a snack time as the one time of the day for the class to come together as a group; others place the food out and the children may eat when they feel hungry. (Limits will have to be set according to children's needs, for often obese children eat the most.) The

teacher-planned activity can be placed on a table, creating an interest center. The children will group themselves naturally, according to interests or proximity to the teacher.

The increased free play situation allows the teacher to spend more time working with small groups and individuals instead of the whole class. The teacher can interact with the materials and the children, diagnostically observing them and helping to increase their involvement and expand their learnings. S/he can work on individual skill needs through the activities in which the child chooses to engage. The curriculum and the physical space will evolve from the children's interests and needs. The result will be an open preschool classroom for children with and without special needs.

However, not all programs for preschool special needs children are organized in this fashion; in focusing on specific skill development some teachers give small groups of children specific tasks (e.g. matching colors, naming shapes) in different areas (e.g. motor, language, perceptual). The children then rotate from one small group to another so that each group of children receive instruction in all areas. The children do not play with the materials, but are told how to use them (e.g. Give me the block that looks like this one.).

In order for these special educators of young children to open their classroom they must realize the value of play for these children.

~~Also,~~ it is possible for them to focus on specific skill development while the children play. If the teacher is aware of each child's developmental skill level s/he can intervene in a play situation so that the child can have a successful experience. The teacher sees a child with fine motor problems attempting to stack inch blocks. When the task becomes frustrating, the teacher may suggest using larger blocks. In working with another child whose fine motor skills are more developed the teacher may ask why s/he thinks they fall and encourage the child to test these hypotheses. Perhaps this child will be able to build several small structures with the inch blocks. The teacher uses the same play experience (stacking blocks) and individualizes it according to the child's abilities. In this way the teacher functions as a facilitator of learning, extending and guiding the learnings which occur during play. By allowing the children to choose activities the teacher can continually act as a facilitator during play situations.

Many special educators stress the importance of a low stimulation environment and criticize open classrooms for special needs children because of their high amount of activity. Other special educators believe that special needs children need high levels of stimulation to function. Several educators, not waiting for this controversy to be resolved, have opened classrooms for children with special needs and have found that the children function quite well in this environment (e.g. Bolen, 1974; Engel, 1973 & 1974; Fahrney,

1973; Gold, 1973; Irvine, 1974; Knoblock, 1973; Miller, 1973; Wiseman, 1974.).

Implications for Teacher Education

Massachusetts' law, Chapter 766, requires public schools to provide services to children with special needs from age three to twenty-one. As a result, local preschools may begin to service special needs children, following the example of Headstart and its ten percent special needs enrollment. Local towns will have the option of reimbursing these programs or beginning new ones, but, in either case, preschool programs for special needs children will increase.

With the current move towards mainstreaming it seems likely that preschools will be servicing children with and without special needs. Preschool teachers will be working with heterogeneous groups of children and will have to adapt activities to suit individual children's abilities, needs, and interests. The open classroom is one approach that enables teachers to provide the kinds of services which are, and will be, needed for preschool special needs children. In open settings a variety of materials are displayed, allowing for differing levels of functioning and differing learning styles. Teachers can focus on individual and small groups of children, facilitating their learning as they engage in play. Play provides young children, especially those who are handicapped, with the opportunity to have control over their environment. Since young handicapped children are often told what to do, the teacher-student shared decision-making process, an important dimension of the open

classroom, provides special needs children with new social skills. The teacher who works with special needs children in open settings must continually make decisions regarding when and how to (or when not to) intervene in children's play.

The Massachusetts Early Education Council (MEEC) is currently developing competencies for certification of an Early Childhood Educator (see Appendix H). They suggest an Early Childhood Special Educator meet the above competencies plus those of the Generic Special Educator developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Division of Special Education (see Appendix I).

It is this writer's opinion that all teachers of young children should possess the competencies of an early childhood educator (see Appendix J). In addition, teachers who work in open settings with preschool children with special needs should possess the following competencies:

Teachers will explain the relationship of developmental psychology and learning theories to the education of young children.

Teachers will analyze the sequence of normal development from birth to seven years.

Teachers will state factors that modify and influence the normal developmental process.

Teachers will list the developmental stages of play.

Teachers will explain the role of play in the learning process.

Teachers will explain the importance of a developmental approach to the education of preschool special needs children.

Teachers will summarize their beliefs concerning children, learning, and the educational process.

Teachers will analyze their classroom to determine whether it functions in accordance with their beliefs and knowledge of children and learning.

Teachers will analyze the physical learning environment and affectual climate according to defined criteria.

Teachers will design a physical learning environment which reflects the interests and needs of the children and adults who use the room.

Teachers will organize the classroom space into functional areas which are sensorally recognizable to the children.

Teachers will organize the classroom so that an on-going activity will not be disrupted by a simultaneously occurring activity.

Teachers will display materials that will arouse children's curiosity and sustain their interest.

Teachers will establish an affectual climate that

- reflects a basic trust in, respect for, and caring about children.
- encourages children to play, take risks, communicate with others, express feelings, make decisions, seek solutions to problems, explore, question, and achieve mastery.

Teachers will analyze their classroom environment in terms of its appropriateness to the children's levels of functioning and interests and initiate changes based on this analysis.

Teachers will serve as an advocate for the right of the child with special needs' to receive all available services necessary for his/her educational development.

Teachers will organize and plan meetings for adults who work with a child (e.g. doctors, therapists, parents) and/or for those people whom the teacher thinks should be working with the child.

Teachers will maintain accurate anecdotal records of meetings regarding the child and the decisions made.

Teachers will accurately communicate the child's interests, levels of functioning, progress, and conditions under which the child functions successfully to concerned adults.

Teachers will make recommendations for services the child should receive.

Teachers will inform concerned adults about resources (i.e. medical, recreational, educational, and social service) available for children and their families.

Teachers will help parents to

- discuss their successes, concerns, problems, and fears about special needs children.
- accept the child's current level of functioning.
- develop appropriate expectations considering the child's current functioning.
- establish short and long term goals for the child.
- utilize educational approaches and behavior management techniques to improve the child's functioning at home.

Teachers will arrange for educational placements when alternatives are needed.

- Teachers will visit preschool and primary programs.
- Teachers will attend core evaluation meetings to present a realistic picture of the child's functioning and potential and to make recommendations for placement.
- Teachers will communicate with the child's new teacher(s) and the parents to help in the transition process.

<u>Teachers will organize, implement, and evaluate an individualized educational program for preschool children</u>.

Teachers will explain their classroom organization and educational practices to students and adults.

Teachers will communicate with and provide guidance for all students and adults who work with the children in their classroom.

Teachers will discuss handicaps, hospitals, and other issues related to special needs children with all the children in their classroom to alleviate their fears and concerns.

Teachers will analyze children's play situations in terms of

when, how, and why a teacher should or should not intervene.

Teachers will assess through observation and checklists the child's motor, language, perceptual, cognitive, psychological and social skills, and develop appropriate educational objectives based on this data.

Teachers will help the children reach these goals through play.

- Teachers will set consistent, firm limits in accordance with the child's needs.
- Teachers will help children accept responsibilities which they are capable of performing.
- Teachers will help children try new activities.
- Teachers will state the skills involved in any activity or task.
- Teachers will modify any activity or task to incorporate a specific skill.

Teachers will provide materials for activities which the children can perform successfully.

- Teachers will break down any task into small sequential steps.
- Teachers will adapt any activity or task to various developmental levels.
- Teachers will reinforce children's involvement in an activity.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for a child to use materials as a means of self-expression.
- Teachers will provide unstructured materials for children to explore.

Teachers will keep accurate, continuous records of the child's progress.

Teachers will review and analyze the child's progress and initiate changes in the educational program based on this analysis.

- Teachers will analyze environmental influences on the child's functioning.
- Teachers will analyze the physical learning environment, the affectual climate and activities in which the child participates to determine their appropriateness to the child's needs.
- Teachers will analyze adult and peer interaction to determine its appropriateness to the child's needs.

Teachers will relate their perceptions of changes and growth they have undergone as a result of their professional experiences.

Teachers will analyze the rewards, difficulties, and frustrations in working with preschool children with special needs in an open setting.

Teachers will analyze their interactions with adults and children and its effect on their teaching performance.

Teachers will analyze the effects of their needs and interests on their teaching performance.

Teachers will compare and contrast their educational beliefs and practices with current thinking in the fields of early childhood, special education, and open education.

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Appendix A

Assumptions Which Underlie Open Education

Barth, R.S. Open Education and the American School. New York: Agathon Press, 1972, 18-47.

Assumptions About Children's Learning

Motivation

Assumption 1: Children are innately curious and will explore without adult intervention.

Assumption 2: Exploratory behavior is self-perpetuating.

Conditions for Learning

Assumption 3: The child will display natural exploratory behavior if he is not threatened.

Assumption 4: Confidence in self is closely related to capacity for learning and for making important choices affecting one's learning.

Assumption 5: Active exploration in a rich environment, offering a wide array of manipulative materials, facilitates children's learning.

Assumption 6: Play is not distinguished from work as the predominant mode of learning in early childhood.

Assumption 7: Children have both the competence and the right to make significant decisions concerning their own learning.

Assumption 8: Children will be likely to learn if they are given considerable choice in the selection of materials they wish to work with and in the choice of questions they wish to pursue with respect to those materials.

Assumption 9: Given the opportunity, children will choose to engage in activities which will be of high

interest to them.

Assumption 10: If a child is fully involved in and having fun with an activity, learning is taking place.

Social Learning

Assumption 11: When two or more children are interested in exploring the same problem or the same materials, they will often choose to collaborate in some way.

Assumption 12: When a child learns something which is important to him, he will wish to share it with others.

Intellectual Development

Assumption 13: Concept formation proceeds very slowly.

Assumption 14: Children learn and develop intellectually at their own rate, and in their own style.

Assumption 15: Children pass through similar stages of intellectual development - each in his own way, and at his own rate and in his own time.

Assumption 16: Intellectual growth and development takes place through a sequence of concrete experiences followed by abstractions.

Assumption 17: Verbal abstractions should follow direct experience with objects and ideas, not precede them or substitute for them.

Evaluation

Assumption 18: The preferred source of verification for a child's solution to a problem comes through the materials he is working with.

Assumption 19: Errors are necessarily a part of learning; they are to be expected and even desired, for they contain information essential for further learning.

Assumption 20: Those qualities of a person's learning which can be carefully measured are not necessarily

the most important.

Assumption 21: Objective measures of performance may have a negative effect on learning.

Assumption 22: Evidence of learning is best assessed intuitively, by direct observation.

Assumption 23: The best way of evaluating the effect of the school experience on a child is to observe him over a long period of time.

Assumption 24: The best measure of a child's work is his work.

Assumptions About Knowledge

Assumption 25: The quality of being is more important than the quality of knowing; knowledge is a means of education, not its end. The final test of an education is what a man is, not what he knows.

Assumption 26: Knowledge is a function of one's personal integration of experience and therefore does not fall neatly into separate categories of "disciplines".

Assumption 27: The structure of knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic, and a function of the synthesis of each individual's experience with the world.

Assumption 28: There is no minimum body of knowledge which is essential for everyone to know.

Assumption 29: It is possible, even likely that an individual may learn and possess knowledge of a phenomenon and yet be unable to display it publicly. Knowledge resides with the knower, not in its public expression.

Appendix B

Themes in Open Education

Walberg, H.J. and Thomas, S.C. Characteristics of Open Education: toward an operational definition. Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center, 1971, 95.

Provisioning of Learning

The teacher provides a rich and responsive physical and emotional environment.

Diagnosis of Learning Events

The teacher views the work children do in school as opportunities for him to assess what the children are learning, as much as opportunities for children to learn.

Instruction - Guidance and Extension of Learning

The teacher acts primarily as a resource person who, in a variety of ways, encourages and influences the direction and growth of learning.

Humaneness - Respect, Openness, and Warmth

The teacher promotes an atmosphere of warmth, openness, and respect for one another.

Reflective Evaluation of Diagnostic Information

The teacher subjects his diagnostic observations to reflective evaluation in order to structure the learning environment adequately.

Seeking Opportunity to Promote Growth

The teacher seeks activities outside the classroom to promote personal and professional growth.

Assumptions - Ideas about Children and the Process of Learning

The teacher's assumptions about children, the process of learning, and the goals of education are generally humanistic and holistic.

Teacher's are aware of and respect the child's individuality and his capacity to direct his own learning.

Self-perception

The teacher is a secure person and a continuing learner.

Appendix C

Some Pedagogical Characteristics of Open Education Teachers at the Primary Level

Walberg, H.J. and Thomas, S.C. Characteristics of open education: toward an operational definition. Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center, 1971, 100-106.

Instruction - Guidance and Extension of Learning

I1 The teacher tends to give individual children small concentrated amounts of his time rather than giving his general attention to the children as a class all day.

I2 The teacher plans instruction individually and pragmatically; he becomes actively involved in the work of each child as one who seeks to help him realize his goals and potential.

I3 The teacher gives diagnostic attention to the particular child and the specific activity in which he is involved before suggesting any change, extension, or redirection of activity.

I4 The teacher uses the child's interaction with materials, equipment, and his environment as the basis of his instruction.

I5 The teacher avoids whole class assignments, instead, amplifies and extends the possibilities of activities children have chosen, through conversation, introduction of related materials, direct instruction when warrented, and assignments appropriate to individual needs.

I6 The teacher keeps in mind long-term goals for his children which inform his guidance and extension of a child's involvement in his chosen activity.

I7 The teacher encourages children's independence and exercise of real choice.

I8 The approach to learning is interdisciplinary; e.g., the child is not expected to confine himself to a single

subject, such as mathematics, when learning.

I9 Activities arise from children's interests and responses to materials and are not prescribed or constrained by predetermined curricula.

Diagnosis of Learning Events

D1 In diagnosis, the teacher pays attention not only to the correctness of a child's response or solution, but also to the understanding and reasoning processes which lead the child to the particular response or solution.

D2 To obtain diagnostic information, the teacher takes an involved interest in the specific work or concern of the child at the moment, through attentive, individualized observing and questioning which is immediate and experience based.

D3 Errors are seen as a valuable part of the learning process because they provide information which the teacher and child can use to further the child's learning.

D4 In diagnosis, the teacher values the child's fantasy as an aid to understanding the child's concerns, interests, and motivations.

D5 When the teacher groups children, he bases his grouping upon his own observations and judgment rather than standardized tests and norms.

D6 Children do not always depend on teacher judgment; they are also encouraged to diagnose their progress through the materials they are working with.

Provisioning for Learning

P1 Manipulative materials are supplied in great diversity and range with little replication, (i.e., not class sets) and children work directly with them.

P2 Books are supplied in diversity and profusion, including reference books, children's literature, and "books" written by the students.

P3 The environment includes materials developed by teacher and children and common environmental materials (plant life, rocks, sand, water, pets, egg cartons, plastic bottles, etc.).

P4 Materials are readily accessible to children.

P5 The teacher gradually modifies the content and arrangement of the classroom based upon diagnosis and evaluation of the children's needs and interests and their use of materials and space.

P6 The teacher permits and encourages children's use of materials in ways he had not foreseen and helps to move activity into useful channels.

P7 Each child has an individual space for his own personal storage, while the major portion of the classroom space is organized for use by all children.

P8 Activity areas provide for a variety of potential usage and allow for a range of ability levels.

P9 Children move freely about the room without asking permission.

P10 Children are free to use other areas of the building and schoolyard and neighborhood for educational purposes.

P11 Many different activities generally go on simultaneously.

P12 Informal talking between children and exchanging of information and ideas is encouraged as contributing to learning.

P13 Children help one another.

P14 The teacher divides the day into large blocks of time within which children, with the help of the teacher, largely determine their own program.

P15 Children generally work individually and in small groups largely determined by their own choices, and guided by the teacher.

P16 The teacher occasionally groups children for lessons directed at specific immediate needs.

P17 The teacher provides some occasions when the whole group gathers for such activities as story or discussion, to share feelings and ideas and activities, and in order to promote the sense of community and belonging to the group.

P18 The class is heterogeneous with regard to ability; streaming or establishing class assignment according to similarity of ability is not practiced.

P19 The teacher promotes a purposeful atmosphere by expecting and enabling the children to use their time in general productively and to value their work and learning.

Evaluation of Diagnostic Information

E1 The teacher uses his observation of the child's interaction with materials and equipment and other children as well as what he produces as the basis of his evaluation of his learning.

E2 Standardized, grade-level, or age-level "norms" of performance are not used for evaluating children or children's work.

E3 Evaluation of a child's school experience is not accomplished by looking only at data collected in a single situation or series of experiences; that is, evaluation of the effect of a child's school experience covers a long range of time, more than a year.

E4 The teacher's record-keeping consists of writing and compiling individual notes and progress reports chronicling the child's cognitive, emotional, and physical development.

E5 The teacher keeps a collection of each child's work and makes use of it for his own evaluation of the child and to encourage his self-evaluation.

E6 The teacher uses evaluation to provide information he will use in seeking better ways to encouraging and

providing for children's development; i.e., he uses evaluation of the children's work and of the usefulness of materials, arrangements, etc. to guide not only his interacting with children but also his provisioning of the classroom environment.

Humaneness - Respect, Openness, and Warmth

H1 The teacher respects each child's personal style of operating, thinking, and acting.

H2 The teacher rarely commands.

H3 The teacher values each child's activities and products as legitimate expressions of his interests, not simply as reflections of his development.

H4 The teacher demonstrates respect for each child's ideas by making use of them whenever possible.

H5 The teacher respects each child's feelings by taking them seriously.

H6 The teacher recognizes and does not try to hide his own emotional responses.

H7 Children feel free to express their feelings.

H8 The teacher attempts to recognize each child's emotions with an understanding of that particular child and the circumstances.

H9 Conflict is recognized and worked out within the context of the group, not simply forbidden or handled by the teacher alone.

H10 There is no abdication of responsible adult authority.

H11 The class operates within clear guidelines, made explicit.

H12 The teacher promotes openness and trust among children and in his relationship with each child.

H13 Relationships are characterized by unsentimental

warmth and affection.

H14 The teacher recognizes and admits his limitations when he feels unable to give a child the help he needs.

H15 In evaluating a child's work, the teacher responds sincerely, based upon a real examination of the product and its relation to the particular child and circumstances.

H16 The teacher promotes an unthreatening climate by helping children to accept mistakes as part of learning, not as measures of failure.

Seeking Opportunity to Promote Growth

S1 The teacher seeks information about new materials.

S2 The teacher experiments himself with materials.

S3 The teacher seeks further information about the community and its physical and cultural resources.

S4 The teacher makes use of help from a supportive advisor.

S5 The teacher enjoys ongoing communication with other teachers about children and learning.

S6 The teacher attempts to know more about the children by getting to know their parents or relatives and their neighborhood.

Self-perception of the Teacher

SP1 The teacher views himself as an active experimenter in the process of creating and adapting ideas and materials.

SP2 The teacher sees himself as a continual learner who explores new ideas and possibilities both inside and outside the classroom.

SP3 The teacher values the way he is teaching as an opportunity for his own personal and professional growth and change.

SP4 The teacher feels comfortable with children taking the initiative in learning, making choices, and being independent of him.

SP5 The teacher recognizes his own habits and need for importance and recognition; he tries to restrain himself from intervening in children's activities based on impatience of those needs rather than the children's.

SP6 The teacher sees his own feelings as an acceptable part of the classroom experience.

SP7 The teacher trusts children's ability to operate effectively and learn in a framework not centered on him.

SP8 The teacher sees himself as one of many sources of knowledge and attention in the classroom.

SP9 The teacher feels comfortable working without predetermined lesson plans and set curricula or fixed time periods for subjects.

SP10 The teacher trusts himself as one who can facilitate learning within a structure which necessitates spontaneous responding to individuals and to a changing variety of situations.

Assumptions - Ideas about Children & the Process of Learning

A1 Children's innate curiosity and self-perpetuating exploratory behavior should form the basis of their learning in school; they should have the opportunity to pursue interests as deeply and for as long as the pursuit is satisfying.

A2 Providing for sustained involvement requires a flexible and individualized organization of time.

A3 Children are capable, with varying degrees of support, of making intelligent decisions in significant areas of their own learning.

A4 Premature conceptualization based upon inadequate direct experience leads to lack of real understanding and to dependence upon others for learning.

A5 Individual children often learn in unpredicted ways, at their own rate, and according to their own style.

A6 Work and play should not be distinguished in the learning process of children because play is a child's way of learning.

A7 Knowledge is a personal synthesis of one's own experience; the learning of "skills" and "subjects" proceeds along many intersecting paths simultaneously.

A8 Traditional techniques of evaluation do not necessarily measure those qualities of learning which are most important, and may have a negative effect on learning.

A9 Looking at a child's development over a long period of time is more useful for evaluation than comparing him with his peers or a standardized norm.

A10 Children have the right to make important decisions regarding their own educational experience.

A11 The child must be valued as a human being, and treated with courtesy, kindness, and respect.

A12 The child's life in school should not be viewed primarily as a preparation for the future; each child's experiences are justifiable in themselves and are not dependent upon future performance for justification.

A13 Given a few consistent, reasonable, and explicit rules and limits, children are able to be more free and productive.

A14 An accepting and warm emotional climate is an essential element in children's learning.

A15 Learning is facilitated by relationships of openness, trust, and mutual respect.

A16 Fear of making mistakes or of not doing well impedes a child's progress in learning.

A17 Objectives of education should include, but go beyond, literacy, dissemination of knowledge, and concept acquisition.

A18 The function of school is to help children learn to learn: to acquire both the ability and the willingness to extend their intellectual and emotional resources and bring them to bear in making decisions, organizing experience, and utilizing knowledge.

Appendix D

Goals of Open Education

Devaney, K. Developing Open Education in America. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1975, 150-151.

Clearly the first evaluation task for the school implementing open education is not the choice of the tests to measure outcomes but the definitions of outcomes sought for particular children by particular teachers....From such honest and pragmatic consideration can come definitive rather than rhetorical statements about aims, standards, and methods. Conventional skills learning goals are restated to incorporate broader definitions of the intellectual activity desired, and free-floating wishes about children's affective learning are anchored to concrete expectations.

These goals statements should represent the open educator's conviction that abilities (that is, cognitive learning objectives) and attitudes (that is, affective objectives) are not separated in real children and in real life; just as the content of a subject, and the process by which it is learned, are not naturally separable. Teachers' statements of learning objectives should indicate their commitment to fostering this interaction of intellect with attitude, Bussis and Chittenden recommend. They call for assessments of the following major kinds of "outcomes:"

Resourcefulness - Evidence that the child is deploying his

unique capabilities (which include cognitive skills but not at any prescribed level), under the teacher's direction, to derive meaning from his experience. Tests for skills should be given in contexts which show the use of the skills in activities which have some purpose for the child. In tests of problem solving, evaluators should not just value logical analysis but also associative and intuitive ways of organizing experience.

Self-perception - Such assessments would provide evidence that children view themselves as "active organizers in their own learning and contributing participants in the classroom."

Personal and cognitive styles - Evidence that individual children are flexible in their working and social traits, not behaving in ways that are easily stereotyped as "neat," "impulsive," "withdrawn," etc.

Self-others frame of reference - Evidence that children are learning from each other but that the individual child relies on himself in matters of judgment and opinion.

Use of language as a form of thought - Evidence of such qualities as deversity and complexity of sentence structure, richness of vocabulary, questioning behavior, "interest in 'playing' with language -- e.g., enjoyment of puns," individual style or "flavor" in writing.

Rathbone, C. Examining the open education classroom. School Review, August, 1972, 80(4), 537-538. Cited by Devaney, K. Developing Open Education in America. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1975, 153.

The child will have the ability and desire to set his own goals.

The child will take responsibility for his own decisions and actions (having made decisions independently).

The child will possess self-discipline and will not need externally applied discipline.

The child will have a capacity for long-term involvement at learning tasks of his own choosing.

The child will possess a willingness to experiment; he will demonstrate an ability to seek new solutions and new problems.

The child will feel free; he will be socially and intellectually adaptable.

The child will exhibit trust in himself and others.

The child will be in touch with his own inner impulses; he will not fear fantasy or feeling.

Appendix E

Goals of Preschool Education

Taylor, B. A Child Goes Forth. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1964, p. 2.

The following are some realistic goals for children in pre-school group:

1. To help them develop a good self-image and a wholesome attitude toward their bodies.
2. To give them a thirst for knowledge.
3. To help them get a good start toward reaching their potentials.
4. To provide opportunities for them to develop their whole bodies through (a) firsthand experiences in social relationships, (b) physical development of large and small muscles, (c) finding acceptable outlets for their emotions, and (d) stimulating experiences which encourage them to think, analyze problems, and arrive at different possible solutions.
5. To encourage them to express themselves through materials, movement, and language by providing ample time and adequate opportunities.
6. To stimulate language development through hearing and using language.
7. To develop an awareness of the five senses.
8. To encourage independence.
9. To help them increase their knowledge by asking questions and exploring their environment, and to help them develop a sense of curiosity through providing ample firsthand experiences.
10. To give them some basic experiences for future learning.
11. To provide experiences with other children of the same age.
12. To meet their needs as individuals and as a group.
13. To encourage them to develop a positive attitude toward school and learning.
14. To help them know that there are friendly adults outside the home.
15. To provide some experiences which they do not have at home.

Brophy, J.E., Good, T.L., Nedler, S.E. Teaching in the Preschool. New York: Haper & Row, 1975, p. 94.

Goals of early education should include:

* Assisting the child in mastering expressive and receptive language skills that are necessary for the development of problem-solving and thinking abilities.
* Assisting the child in the development of sensory-perceptual skills.
* Assisting the child in developing gross and fine motor skills.
* Assisting the child in acquiring interpersonal skills necessary for interacting effectively with peers and adults.
* Assisting the child in acquiring intrapersonal skills necessary for achieving personal autonomy.

Although there would be very little argument regarding the substance of these statements, various models would emphasize specific goals in differing degrees.

Hendrick, J. The Whole Child: New Trends in Early Education. St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Co., 1975, p. 275-276.

Physical development

1. The child will be able to demonstrate or acquire physical skills appropriate to his age.
2. He will develop a sense of himself as being physically competent both in relation to his personal aspirations and in comparison with his peers.

Emotional stability and mental health

1. The child will remain in touch with a wide range of feelings, both positive and negative, within himself and will be encouraged to recognize and acknowledge their presence and express them in appropriate ways.
2. As he matures, the child will begin to achieve empathy and insight into the feelings and concerns of other children and members of the staff.
3. The development of self-esteem, which is basic to mental health, will be fostered through the development of a

variety of skills and competence in activities that the child sees as valuable.

4. The child will develop a sense of identity by learning who he is in relation to the space about him, in relation to other members of his family and their cultural background, and in relation to the children and staff in the school.

Creative self-expression

1. The child will express his own ideas and feelings through the use of self-expressive materials.
2. Creativity in ideas and in problem solving will be deliberately fostered in the children by the staff.

Social competence

1. The child will gain the ability to care about the rights and needs of other people. This is related to the mental health goal of feeling empathy for the feelings and needs of other people.
2. He will develop the ability to tolerate separation from his parents.
3. He will develop the ability to share staff attention with other children part of the time.
4. He will develop the ability to experience pleasure in working for the good of the group.
5. He will develop the ability to play with other children, accepting leadership from others from time to time and also contributing his own ideas when desirable.

Language and cognitive development

1. The child will be able to express himself verbally by using an increasingly wide range of vocabulary and by gradually extending the length and complexity of his syntax.
2. He will increase his communication skills by learning to listen to other people and grasp what they mean.
3. The child will develop his intellectual ability by performing a variety of tasks intended to provide practice in particular mental abilities that are relevant to later success in school. These abilities include:
   a. The ability to group and classify items.
   b. The ability to arrange items in logical order and tell what comes next (using both spatial and temporal sequences).

c. The ability to formulate common associations.
d. The ability to identify objects that are identical and match these together.
e. The ability also to identify items that are different and label them as such.
f. The ability to grasp elementary principles of cause and effect.
g. The ability to transfer learning in order to facilitate the solving of problems.

Nimnicht, G. Overview of Responsive Model Program. In B. Spodek (Ed.), Early Childhood Education: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973, p. 201-202.

The Objectives of the Responsive Model

The major objectives of the program are to help children develop a healthy self-concept as it relates to learning in the school and in the home; and to develop their intellectual ability, specifically, the ability to solve problems. In order to do this the child must develop his senses and perceptions, since the senses are the source of data for the thought process; his language ability, because language is a tool of the thought process; and his concept formation ability, because he needs to be able to deal with abstractions and to classify information to organize thought.

A child has a healthy self-concept in relationship to learning and school, if:

a. He likes himself and his people;
b. He believes that what he thinks, says, and does makes a difference;
c. He believes that he can be successful in school;
d. He believes that he can solve a variety of problems;
e. He has a realistic estimate of his own abilities and limitations; and,
f. He expresses feelings of pleasure and enjoyment.

After being in the program two or three years, most children should be able to:

a. Recognize, complete, extend, and discover patterns in one direction;
b. Recognize, complete, extend, and discover patterns in two directions (matrix games);
c. Recognize, extend, and discover rules from examples (inductive thinking);
d. Persevere, concentrate and succeed on problems involving the breaking of "set";
e. Adapt to games involving rule changes;
f. Eliminate what is known to determine what is unknown;
g. Use feedback productively to modify actions;
h. Solve verbal and math puzzles;
i. Seek a solution to one-person problems without assistance;
j. Recognize that a problem cannot be solved with information at hand;
k. Anticipate the probable response of the other player in interactional games;
l. Anticipate the probable response of others to alternative actions of the individual in some social situation; and,
m. Cope with the emotions of other individuals.

The other important objective is that the child have a knowledge and understanding of his cultural background.

Appendix F

Goals of Special Education

Dunn, L.M. (Ed.) Exceptional Children in the Schools: Special Education in the Transition. (2nd ed.) New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973, 101.

curricular objectives (for moderate general learning disabilities) have been broadened considerably to include the following four rather comprehensive goals:

1. Self-help, basic readiness, and independent living skills development.
2. Communication, language, and cognitive development.
3. Socialization and personality development.
4. Vocational-, recreational-, and leisure-skills development.

Dupont, H. (Ed.) Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children: Readings. (2nd ed.) New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1975, 15.

our concern today is that we develop programs that are appropriate for each disturbed child, programs that respect the child's right to be as normal and human as possible.

It should be noted that this concern is an outgrowth of a value judgment: All children have the right to an education that will help them become as normal and human as possible. This goal does not follow logically from scientific research, but it is consistent with the humanistic spirit and values which have accompanied the development of science.

Braun, S.J. & Lasher, M.G. Preparing Teachers to Work with Disturbed Preschoolers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Nimrod Press, 1970, 50.

We believe that a teacher can help a young child best if her goals are directed toward changing behavior....such operational goals serve to produce effective results in improving the level of competence and skill of preschoolers in dealing with their own feelings and significant others.

In the course of our work in the training program, we have developed four concepts which delineate potential objectives for a teacher working with young children in a group. Although these four concepts have proved helpful for teachers who work with emotionally disturbed children, they may have broader application as well.

We list them below:

1. A child can realize his effect on other people and materials.
2. A child has legitimate needs that can be legitimately met.
3. A child can be reflective about his own feelings and behavior.
4. A child can elaborate his ideas and actions when interacting with others or with materials.

Connor, F.P. & Talbot, M.E. An Experimental Curriculum for Young Mentally Retarded Children. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1970, 2.

attention was directed toward identification of the areas of teacher concern, later identified as long-range goals for the children in the group situations. The following problem-centered categories were defined to cover those areas in which children should establish competence: (1) daily living skills, (2) cognitive and sensory-motor skills adequate for participation in subsequent school programs, (3) communication skills adequate for group conversation, cooperative planning, and evaluation of experiences, (4) tolerance of a variety of simultaneously presented stimuli through selection and sustained interest in one stimulus, (5) understanding and ability to accept teacher values and interests different from their own, (6) extra-curricular social adjustment patterns for safe participation in activities such as swimming, field trips and playing in the park.

Connor, F.P. & Talbot, M.E. An Experimental Curriculum for Young Mentally Retarded Children. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1970, 230.

The Behavioral Goals

The teachers kept in mind as general goals six habits of functioning. These had to do with (1) motivation, (2) attention, (3) perseverance (work habits), (4) problem-solving, (5) concept development, and (6) oral communication. These goals were not mutually exclusive.

Rothstein, J.H. Mental Retardation: Readings and Resources. (2nd ed.) New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1971, 157-158.

To summarize, the objectives underlying the nursery school program for the trainable child emphasize the development of (1) emotionally secure, socially adaptable children; (2) oral language; (3) basic skills and habits associated with health, self-care, and personal grooming; and (4) a foundation for continual growth in the

areas of social and vocational adequacy. These goals provide the basis for the designation of curricular activities.

Appendix G

Play & Young Special Needs Children

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, Division of Mental Retardation. The Infant/Toddler Family Creative Play Center: A Prospectus, 1975.

As its title suggests, the Infant/Toddler Creative Play Center is pedicated upon the assumption that play and the glory of achievement are the most important work of every child, the prime ways through which each achieves understanding, inner discipline, and a heightened self-image. Play is the business of childhood and the forerunner of adult competence. Despite its supreme importance in a child's early years, however, play is the most imperiled aspect of the lives of special infants and toddlers because the sorrow and trauma associated with their birth can adversely affect the ability of their parents and siblings to stimulate them in normal ways. While parents will readily seek professional services for such children, they often distrust playful experience as less ameliorative than medical intervention, since play does not require the discomfort and hard work associated with corrective surgery, or physical and occupational therapy. However, standard therapeutic measures cannot and will not ever suffice to advance a child developmentally unless his prime need for playful operation on his environment is also nurtured and sustained....

It is important to point out that play is seen here as a tool through which planned goals and objectives can be achieved. Thus, while play will appear free and unstructured to the child, such activities will in fact be carefully planned and structured to meet each child's specific developmental needs.

Appendix H

Competencies Developed by MEEC

Massachusetts Early Education Council. Position paper on teacher certification. November, 1975.

Competencies needed by teachers of young children (birth to seven years):

1. Detailed knowledge in each area of human growth and development between birth and seven years old. This would include sensory-motor, cognitive, language and speech, social relationships, and patterns of interaction.

2. Detailed knowledge of learning environments for young children from birth to seven years old.

3. Knowledge of philosophy and theories of learning and their application to the education of young children between birth and age seven.

4. Knowledge of the environmental influences of the family, the community, and the influence of the media on the young child age birth to seven years.

5. The ability to use this knowledge to help families maximize the educational development of the child.

6. Knowledge of the economic, political, and social systems including the operation of the educational system and their effect on the work of the early childhood educator.

7. Comprehensive knowledge of educational strategies and curriculum models.

To meet the mandate of Chapter 766, many public school systems are providing preschool educational programs for young children with special needs. For this reason an additional category of certification should be considered: The Early Childhood Special Educator. Many knowledges and strategies used with this age range are significantly different from these employed by Special Educators of older children. Accepting the premise that special competencies are needed for teaching the three to seven year old range, the Early Childhood Special Educator would need all the above competencies for certification PLUS those delineated in the qualifications of Generic Special Educator currently used by the Division of Special Education.

Appendix I

Competency Areas for Generic Special Educator

Competency Areas for Generic Special Educator. Massachusetts Department of Education, Division of Special Education.

1. The influence of developmental deviations on growth and learning.

2. Speech and language development.

3. Observation, recording and analysis of children's behavior and learning environments. Development and implementation of individualized educational plans.

4. Behavioral and classroom management, generic role-consulting and interpersonal skills, program evaluation for decision-making.

Appendix J

CDA COMPETENCIES

A. SET UP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Organize space into functional areas recognizable by the children, e.g., block building, library, dramatic play.

2. Maintain a planned arrangement for furniture, equipment and materials and for large and small motor skills learning, and for play materials that is understandable to the children.

3. Organize the classroom so that it is possible for the children to be appropriately responsible for care of belongings and materials.

4. Arrange the setting to allow for active movement as well as quiet engagement.

5. Take preventive measures against hazards to physical safety.

6. Keep light, air and heat conditions at best possible levels.

7. Establish a planned sequence of active and quiet periods, of balanced indoor and outdoor activities.

8. Provide for flexibility of planned arrangements for space and schedule to adjust to spacial circumstances and needs of a particular group of children or make use of special educational opportunities.

9. Recognize unusual behaviour or symptoms which may indicate a need for health care.

B. ADVANCE PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCE

1. Use the kind of materials, activities and experiences that encourage exploring, experimenting, questioning, that help children fulfill curiosity, gain mastery, and progress toward higher levels of achievement.

2. Recognize and provide for the young child's basic impulses to explore the physical environment, master the problems that require skillful body coordination.

3. Increase knowledge of things in their world by stimulating observation and providing for manipulative constructive activities.

4. Use a variety of techniques for advancing language comprehension and usage in an atmosphere that encourages free verbal communication among children and between children and adults.

5. Work gradually toward recognition of the symbols for designating words and numbers.

6. Promote cognitive power by stimulating children to organize their experience (as it occurs incidentally or pre-planned for them) in terms of relationships and conceptual dimensions: classes of objects; similarities and differences, comparative size, amount, degree orientation in time and space; growth and decay; origins; family kinship, casuality.

7. Provide varied opportunities for children's active participation, independent choices experimentation and problem-solving within the context of a structured, organized setting and program.

8. Balance unstructured materials such as paint, clay, blocks with structured materials that require specific procedures and skills; balance the use of techniques that invite exploration and independent discovery with techniques that demonstrate and instruct.

9. Stimulate focused activities: observing, attending, initiating, carrying through, raising questions, searching answers and solutions for the real problems that are encountered and reviewing the outcomes of experience.

10. Support expressive activities by providing a variety of creative art media, and allowing children freedom to symbolize in their own terms without imposition of standards of realistic representation.

11. Utilize, support and develop the play impulse in its various symbolic and dramatic forms, as an essential component of the program; giving time, space, necessary materials and guidance in accord with its importance for deepening and clarifying thought and feeling in early childhood.

12. Extend children's knowledge, through direct and vicarious experience, of how things work, of what animals and plants need to live, of basic work processes necessary for everyday living.

13. Acquaint children with the people who keep things functioning in their immediate environment.

C. BUILD POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH

1. Provide an environment of acceptance in which the child can grow toward a sense of positive identity as a boy/girl, as a member of his family and ethnic group, as a competent individual with a place in the child community.

2. Give direct, realistic affirmation to the child's advancing skills, growing initiative and responsibility, increasing capacity for adaptation, and emerging interest in cooperation, in terms of the child's actual behaviour.

3. Demonstrate acceptance to the child by including his home language functionally in the group setting and helping him to use it as a bridge to another language for the sake of extending communication.

4. Deal with individual differences in children's style and pace of learning and in the social-emotional aspects of their life situations by adjusting the teacher-child relationship to individual needs, by using a variety of teaching methods and by maintaining flexible progressive expectations.

5. Recognize when behaviour reflects emotional conflicts around trust, possession, separation, rivalry, etc., and adapt the program of experiences, teacher-child and child-child relationships so as both to give support and to enlarge the capacity to face these problems realistically.

6. Be able to assess special needs of individual children and call in specialist help where necessary.

7. Keep a balance for the individual child between tasks and experiences from which he can enjoy feelings of mastery and success and those other tasks and experiences which are a suitable and stimulating challenge to him yet not likely to lead to discouraging failure.

8. Assess levels of accomplishment for the individual child against the background of norms of attainment for a developmental stage, taking into careful consideration his individual strengths and weaknesses and considering opportunities he has or has not had for learning and development.

D. ORGANIZE AND SUSTAIN THE POSITIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A GROUP IN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Plan the program of activities for the children to include opportunities for playing and working together and sharing experiences and responsibilities with adults in a spirit of enjoyment as well as for the sake of social development.

2. Create an atmosphere through example and attitude where it is natural and acceptable to express feelings both positive and negative: love, sympathy, enthusiasm, pain, frustration, loneliness or anger.

3. Establish a reasonable system of limits, rules, and regulations to be understood, honoured and protected by both children and adults, appropriate to the stage of development.

4. Foster acceptance and appreciation of cultural variety by children and adults as an enrichment of personal experience; develop projects that utilize cultural variation in the family population as resource for the educational program.

E. BRING ABOUT OPTIMAL COORDINATION OF HOME AND CENTRE CHILD-REARING PRACTICES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Incorporate important elements of the cultural backgrounds of the families being served, food, language, music, holidays, etc., into the children's program in order to offer them continuity between home and centre settings at this early stage of development.

2. Establish relationships with parents that facilitate the free flow of information about their children's lives inside and outside the centre.

3. Communicate and interact with parents toward the goal of understanding and considering the priorities of their values for their children.

4. Perceive each child as a member of his particular family and work with his family to resolve disagreements between the family's life style with children and the centre's handling of child behaviour and images of good education.

5. Recognize and utilize the strengths and talents of parents as they may contribute to the development of their own children and give parents every possible opportunity to participate and enrich the group program.

F. CARRY OUT SUPPLEMENTARY RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

1. Make observations on the growth and development of individual children and changes in group behaviour formally or informally, verbally or in writing, and share this information with other staff involved in the program.

2. Engage with other staff in cooperative planning activities such as a schedule or program changes indicated as necessary to meet particular needs of a given group of children or incorporation of new knowledge or techniques as these become available in the general field of early childhood education.

3. Be aware of management functions such as ordering of supplies and equipment, scheduling of staff time (helpers, volunteers, parent participants) monitoring food and transportation services, safe-guarding health and safety and transmit needs for efficient functioning to the responsible staff member or consultant.